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Elections

## ELECTIONS

### 1. (OCI 2225/64 The Communist View of the Situation in SE Asia)

Our reaction to the attack on the destroyers was swift and powerful, but it was a limited reaction. US spokesmen went to great lengths to make it clear that the air strikes were intended only as retaliation for a specific action, and that the US response would be limited to a one-time action if the provocation was not repeated.

This has probably reinforced the Communist belief that the hard line taken by the US in the spring, threatening destruction in NVN if the situation in the South continues to deteriorate, was at least in part an outgrowth of the pre-election situation in the US. They probably ~~also think we hope to bring about~~ believe it is a political maneuver designed to freeze the Indochina situation and thus to avoid a choice between damaging reverses or new commitments of US forces in the months ahead. They probably also think we hope to bring a slackening of pressure in Laos and SVN which would give non-Communist forces a breathing space and improve their political and military positions.